I. Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces without prejudice all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A middleware platform system comprising:

at least one external short message entity (ESME);

at least one short message service center (SMSC);

a universal message gateway including a first common interface for connecting to said at least one ESME and a second common interface for connecting to said at least one SMSC; said universal message gateway further including a home location register module and a mobile switching center module;

said home location register module and said mobile switching center module being configured to receive short message service traffic from said at least one SMSC; and

said universal message gateway being configured to direct said short message service traffic to a virtual mobile station address associated with said at least one ESME, wherein said universal message gateway is configured to implement a security and network management algorithm for blocking incoming said traffic based upon the SMSC from which said traffic was relayed or originated.

2. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of SMSCs wherein at least two of said SMSCs are disparate in design.

3. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 2, wherein at least one of said SMSCs sends domestic network originated telecommunications messaging traffic to said universal message gateway and another one of said SMSCs sends foreign network originated telecommunications messaging traffic to said universal message gateway.

4. (Previously Presented) The gateway of claim 11, where telecommunications messaging traffic includes at least one of Multi-Media traffic, interactive and/or synchronous mobile text, and short message service traffic.

5. (Currently Amended) A computer program stored on a computer readable media when executed by a computer, said computer program comprising:

instructions for a universal message gateway having a first common interface for connecting to at least one external short message entity (ESME), a second common interface for connecting to at least one short message service center (SMSC), and a home location register module and a mobile switching center module configured to receive telecommunications messaging traffic from said at least one SMSC,

wherein the instructions configure said universal message gateway to direct said telecommunications messaging traffic to a virtual mobile station address associated with said at least one ESME, and wherein the instructions also configure said universal message gateway to implement a security and network management

algorithm for blocking incoming said traffic based upon the SMSC from which said traffic was relayed or originated.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, where said first common interface includes a first receiver manager which interacts with said ESME, and said second common interface includes a second receiver manager which interacts with said SMSCs.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A middleware platform system comprising:

at least one external short message entity (ESME);

at least one short message service center (SMSC);

a universal message gateway including a first common interface for connecting to said at least one ESME and a second common interface for connecting to said at least one SMSC; said universal message gateway further including a home location register module and a mobile switching center module;

said home location register module and said mobile switching center module being configured to receive short message service traffic from said at least one SMSC; and

said universal message gateway being configured to direct said short message service traffic to a virtual mobile station address associated with said at least one ESME.

~~The system of claim 1,~~ wherein said common interfaces are configured to implement a throttling parameter defining a number of short message service messages that are permitted to be received from one of said SMSCs or directed to said ESME within a configurable time frame by said universal message gateway.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A universal message gateway comprising:

a first common interface for connecting to at least one external short message entity (ESME);

a second common interface for connecting to at least one short message service center (SMSC);

a home location register module and a mobile switching center module configured to receive telecommunications messaging traffic from said at least one SMSC; and

a routing engine connected to said first common interface, said second common interface, said home location register module, and said mobile switching center module;

wherein said routing engine is configured to direct said telecommunications messaging traffic to a virtual mobile station address associated with

said at least one ESME, and wherein said common interfaces are configured to implement a throttling parameter defining a number of short message service messages that are permitted to be received from one of said SMSCs or directed to said ESME within a configurable time frame by said universal message gateway.

12. (Previously Presented) The universal message gateway of claim 11, wherein said at least one ESME is associated with an application service provider (ASP).

13. (Previously Presented) The universal message gateway of claim 11 wherein said telecommunications messaging traffic is routed to said at least one ESME within at least one of parameter selected from the group consisting of SMSC Connection ID, Termination TON/NPI/MSISDN, Origination TON/NPI/MSISDN, protocol ID, data coding scheme, and SMSC address.

14. (Previously Presented) The universal message gateway of claim 11 wherein said first common interface is based on the short message peer to peer (SMPP) protocol.

15. (Previously Presented) The universal message gateway of claim 11 wherein said routing engine is further configured to perform at least one of a throttling function, a queuing function, and a buffering function.

16. (Previously Presented) The universal message gateway of claim 11 further comprising an SMS reply server configured to generate a response message to confirm a successful delivery of a message to said at least one ESME.